

C  
S2240K

1914

UNIVERSITY OF THE  
ILLINOIS  
JAN 1915

## St. Olaf College Bulletin

VOL. X

DECEMBER, 1914

No. 4

Published Quarterly by the Faculty of St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota

Entered Oct. 1, 1904, at Northfield, as Second Class Matter, under Act of Congress of July 16, 1894

The St. Olaf College Bulletin is sent gratuitously to all who apply for it

THE INSTALLATION OF PRESIDENT  
L. A. VIGNESS

The celebration of the Sixth of November, 1914, was marked by two features: the installation of the new president and the commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of the institution. Dr. Martin Hegland delivered the address commemorating Foundation Day. Dr. M. O. Bøckman preached the installation sermon. President T. H. Dahl inducted Professor L. A. Vigness into the presidency of St. Olaf College. President Vigness, in an address, printed below, set forth the principles which will largely govern his administration.

Greetings and congratulations were extended President Vigness upon his installation by the following: Mayor C. E. Lyman in behalf of the city of Northfield; Dr. D. J. Cowling in behalf of Carleton College; Dr. F. A. Schmidt in behalf of the United Church Seminary; Professor K. Løkenegaard in behalf of the Lutheran Normal School; Professor A. G. Tuve in behalf of Augustana College; Professor L. W. Boe in behalf of the academies; Professor E. Hetle in behalf of the Alumni Association; Dr. Geo. O. Berg in behalf of the St. Olaf Faculty; Mr. Ivan Ringstad in behalf of the St. Olaf Association; Mr. O. Olsen Erling in behalf of the Board of Trustees of the Church; Professor J. A. Aasgaard in behalf of the Board of Regents.

## INAUGURAL ADDRESS

(By Prof. L. A. Vigness, President of St. Olaf College,  
November 6, 1914.)

An occasion like this is one filled with significance. It has a meaning of vital importance to a great cause. St. Olaf College, like every educational institution, is an organization; and it is living, thriving, strong, but at the same time delicate, sensitive. A clumsy move, an injudicious action, may inflict disabling injuries upon its life. That its friends, realizing this, should experience deep concern when in the course of events it became necessary to select a successor to an able retiring president is a perfectly natural situation.

When, therefore, by command of the United Church, it has fallen to my lot to assume the duties connected with the most sensitive station in the institution; and when today the Church through its president officially and solemnly has committed this high office into my responsible care; then it becomes my duty and privilege to set forth a few of the leading principles that will guide me in the performance of these entrusted duties. That in the actual work the limit of ability will cause me to fall far short of the ideal at which my eye has taken aim, I fully anticipate, and in all humility hasten to acknowledge at the very beginning. At the same time I beg to give assurance that it will be my constant endeavor to use the means at the president's command to bring St. Olaf College increasingly

nearer to the high aim that its founders, friends and supporters have with pious devotion long since established.

### Education in Transition.

Education is today in an unsettled condition. At no time in the history of our country was there so much confusion as to what the training of our children and young people should be; or as to what means should be used in the process. Everywhere throughout the land are heard the voices of the prophets of the new era. A majority chorus sing harmoniously the constant refrain, "Old things have passed away, behold all things are new." The old education is dead; the old school is dead; the old college is dead. And, they add, instead of all this old regime we have shaped the entire educational scheme into new and better forms.

It is not in my mind to go the whole length with the radical wing of these new prophets. And at the same time I do not unduly mourn the passing of the old college. The realm in which the human intellect moves has so immensely enlarged its territory in our time that we would not for a moment desire to go back and limit ourselves to the earlier structure of the college curriculum. We have entered into a new age of human culture; and it will be our duty to face the new conditions that confront us and in manly and intelligent manner take our full share in the labor of solving the concomitant problems.

When now, then, the old college is dead, what shall the new college be? What do we want it to do? What shall be its finished product? What, in short, shall hereafter be the exact nature and function of the American college?

Everybody knows. And when we sum it up, nobody knows. Says a writer: "Our college authorities are themselves far from happy. They dwell complacently on rapidly increasing numbers, splendid 'plants' and the unchecked flow of benefactions; but there is considerable uneasiness just below the surface. The pilots are apparently not sure as to whither to steer; at times they steer for several ports at once; again, for no particular port at all." The same writer quotes Mr. Charles Frances Adams as follows:

"So far as I have been able to ascertain through twenty-five years of discussions in the Harvard Board, of which I have been a member, the authorities are as wide apart now as ever they were. There is no agreement; no united effort to a given end." President Schurman of Cornell University uses the following language:

"The college is without clear-cut notions of what a liberal education is and how it is to be secured \* \* \* and the pity of it is that this is not a local or special disability, but a paralysis affecting every college of arts in America." \*

These quotations enable us by competent testimony from the college world to see that while the old college is past, the new college has not yet been definitely formed; and no man can tell us exactly what it is ultimately going to be.

### St. Olaf College in General.

With this situation before us we are naturally led to ask, What shall St. Olaf College be?

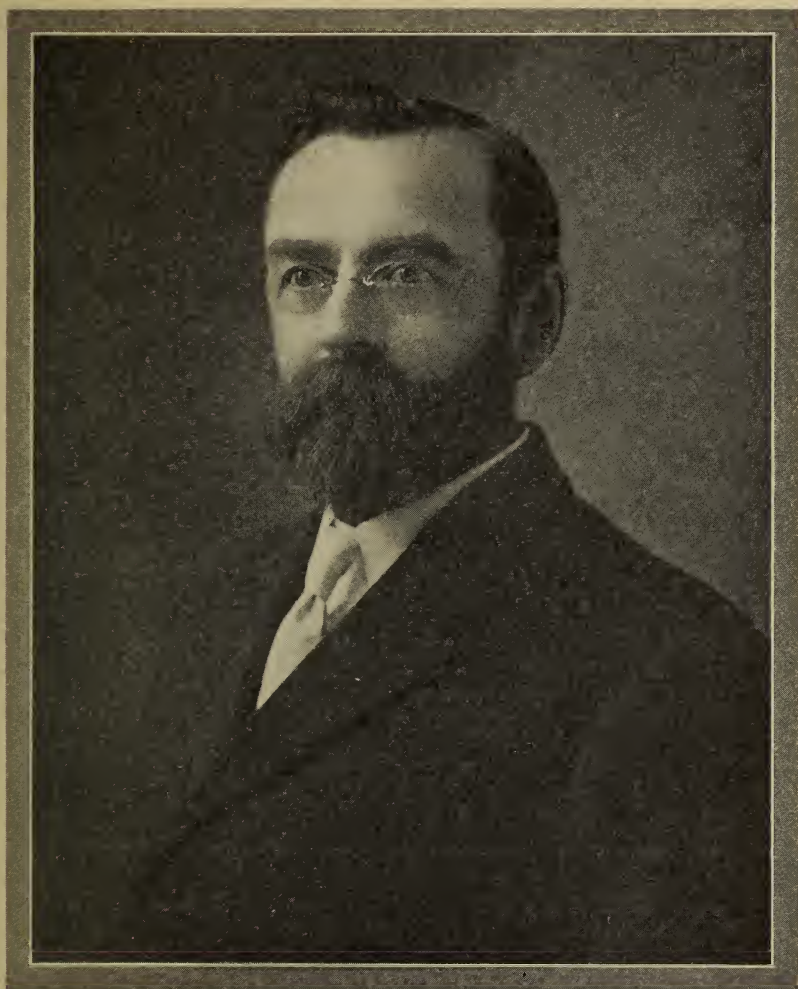
I realize the impossibility of giving at the present time a complete answer to this question in all the details involved. As an educational institution, functioning as one in a great system of kindred institutions in the nation, it must, as a matter of course, keep its pace in the line of the general development throughout this system.

In determining more accurately what we aim to make it, let us

---

\*) See Flexner, "The American College," pages 6-7.

begin with the principle enunciated by our Lord when he said, "By their fruits ye shall know them." Every institution is judged by its finished product. If the selfbinder is a good and perfectly working machine we judge the factory from which it came to be a good institution; if the binder is a poor and unsatisfactory machine, we judge the factory accordingly. The same standard prevails in regard to St. Olaf College and every other educational institution.



PROF. L. A. VIGNESS

What, then, is the finished product that St. Olaf aims to contribute to human society? What kind of a person do we want the graduate to be?

To delineate him in his ideal completeness is beyond our reach at the present moment. But I beg, in the following few words, to picture him in main outline:

The graduate of St. Olaf College is designed to be a person whose

natural energy of body and soul has been liberated and developed for large effort; a person who is trained in the art of sound thinking; who is deeply rooted in eternal truth; who is vitally interested in all that concerns the community, the Church and State; who has such balanced judgment, fine tact, vigorous initiative and persistent aggressiveness as to qualify him for useful leadership; who is intense and efficient in action; and who, governed by a living faith in Jesus Christ, consecrates all his talents and labors to his Redeemer's service, be he in the Gospel ministry or any other legitimate calling.

If her graduates are in any measure to approximate this ideal, St. Olaf College must provide a well-arranged and well-directed course of training for the body and for the mind.

And first a few words in regard to the

### Education of the Body.

Here we are brought to the subject of college athletics. This is largely the form in which interest in physical education manifests itself at the present time. While this line of college activity might at first seem rather unimportant and of subordinate rank, yet it has laid such large hold upon the college-world that in the minds of many young people it is made the principal consideration in determining the choice of the college they wish to attend. There rests upon these college athletic interests a great overemphasis.

I am not opposed to intercollegiate contests. They will continue for some time yet. I only want to say that while they may in some respects encourage, yet they do not meet the proper requirements of a correct physical education. It is a curious fact that many of our greatest athletes are physically weak. Let a competent authority testify. Paul von Boeckman says: "It is a well-known fact that nearly all the world's greatest athletes have died of consumption or pneumonia. Several of the most prominent teachers of physical culture of the past have died of some disease of the lungs." The author then names, as examples, Jack Kennedy, Peter Jackson, Pennell Dempsey, and adds: "I have a list of over two hundred athletes \* \* \* who died of consumption or pneumonia."

The fact that these men of apparent physical strength contracted these diseases and subsequently died from them is evidence that their bodies were in a weak condition. The fact that a man can in a strenuous contest, perform deeds that require a sudden and violent output of strength, skill and speed, may prove him an athlete; but it does not prove him to be in an ideal physical condition.

Athletic training, therefore, is not to be taken as the correct plan for a course in physical education. It is only one feature of such a course and—not the principal feature. A true course in body-education must aim at a result set forth approximately in the following words:

When a man knows fairly well the structure of his own body; knows the functions of all the organs in his body; knows as far as present means permit, the effects of various foods upon each function; knows how to breathe correctly; knows how to use light, air, water, exercise, rest, sleep, in such quantity, quality and manner as to sustain and promote the normal action of every organ of the body; and when, in addition to this knowledge, he by persistent practice has established such habits of mind and body that he almost instinctively each day puts this knowledge into actual use; and when by these means he has, as he truly can, acquired such vital resistance to ordinary diseases and such buoyancy of all physical functions as to do with the utmost delight the strenuous work of life, then he may be said to have a good physical education.

But to attain this condition requires regular, persistent, determined, well-directed effort for a long time. Education of the body

is as slow and long a process as education of the mind. It is not accomplished by an exciting game now and then. But the development of this condition in the student should be the aim of our colleges in their efforts in the line of physical education.

At this point I take the liberty of commending most highly the efforts now being made to build at St. Olaf College a well-equipped gymnasium. I earnestly hope that all friends of the institution will heartily rally to its accomplishment.

We turn next to some consideration arising from the fact that St. Olaf College is a

### Norwegian-American College.

St. Olaf has the general characteristics of the institution known as the American College. But it possesses also a further characteristic. It is an institution formed and maintained by Norwegian-Americans. There are some who urge that all our citizens should be called by the simple word American: that there ought to be no hyphen connecting with it a preceding modifier. We reply: It is yet too early in the history of this nation to establish that principle. The American nation and civilization are yet in process of formation. England has long been contributing her share; Germany hers; Holland hers; Ireland hers; Sweden hers; Norway hers; other nations theirs. It will yet be a long time before the people of these different nationalities shall be alike in language, manners, customs and national consciousness. The simple fact is that they differ and we must needs have a term hyphenated with American to name them. Now let us note this: Final American civilization will be the sum total of what each of these colonies of immigrants shall have contributed towards it. If a people contributes but little, that people will have small share in our national history. If a people makes large contribution, that people will count for much in the future history of our land.

Our Norwegian people came to this great land in the West. In the course of half a century, or a little more, a portion of them have, working together, made such an impression upon our Western civilization that any intelligent—I repeat it, intelligent—Norwegian is justly proud to belong to such a race. Some there are who have needlessly left us; but we have yet with us so large a number of the stout and the brave of our race that we are able successfully to go onward contributing from our national inheritance to the forming civilization of the great American nation.

St. Olaf College, with no disposition to clannishness, recognizing fully its duties as an institution in America, will continue to do its best for the preservation and promulgation of the abiding elements in Norwegian thought, language, literature and arts.

### "Lack of Intellectual Stamina."

The limit of time does not permit me to enter into such a full discussion of the intellectual phase of college training as I would wish. And yet I beg permission to express a few thoughts.

The President of the Carnegie Foundation finds that "The two objections generally brought against the college today are vagueness of aim and lack of intellectual stamina."

We have already spoken of the "vagueness of aim." Now what can be done about the lack of "intellectual stamina"?

If this is a general weakness of the average American college it ought, in the first place, to induce serious self-examination also on the part of us who are in responsible connection with St. Olaf.

I believe this charge against the college is largely justifiable. And it calls for inquiries as to causes. In this I must necessarily be brief.

We must note in the first place that progress toward the pos-

session of a genuinely robust intellect is conditioned on a rigorous and prolonged concentration of energy on the part of the student. He should have no more distraction from his studies than enough to maintain a good physical and mental equilibrium.

Let us, in the second place, note the environment in which the present-day college student must do his work.

In the college curriculum we have the college elective system. A long list of studies, varying in the degree of demand upon the intellect, is placed before him. There can be no doubt as to the fact that this comparatively new mode of allotting intellectual pabulum has had a strong tendency to minimize rigorous intellectual effort. Whether this result necessarily follows the introduction of the elective system, or whether it follows from the possible fact that colleges have not yet learned how to administer the system to the best advantage, I am not prepared to say definitely; but I suspect both. In this matter we must yet be learners. Let us hope, however, that we can yet make the system productive of real "intellectual stamina."

A second element in the environment of the college student is the greatly increased general activities in college life. There are literary, oratorical, dramatic, journalistic, musical, social, athletic and other organizations all requiring students' attention. There are contests, intramural and inter-collegiate, all connected with more or less general stir and excitement. All these things fill the college atmosphere with a spirit that is very unfavorable to concentration and robust intellectual accomplishments.

Still another circumstance exerting an adverse influence on the cause of the intellect in college work is the disproportionately high place intercollegiate victories and victors hold in public opinion. This deplorable attitude of the public mind is reflected in the extensive and glowing reports carried by our newspapers concerning intercollegiate athletic games. Recently a game of football was played by Harvard and Michigan. The Boston Globe of the next day had twenty-six, the Boston Post had thirty-one columns, practically four solid newspaper pages, on this game and general football reports. This and kindred general facts, show that the college student who stands high in glory with the public is the athletic hero who performed the greatest stunts in the contest. The real intellectual digger—who ever hears of him, or who has any use for him? Public sentiment gives small cheer to the quiet achievements of intellect in college life.

If this enumeration of causes is correct, it follows that no college alone is able to do much to remedy the trouble. The whole college world must be united in a persistent effort to diminish these unfavorable influences.

St. Olaf College will exert its best energy in co-operation with other institutions to make improvements in this important matter.

I have reserved for the last part of my talk the remarks I desire to make as to our attitude toward

### **The Christian Faith.**

It is a cause for much joy that on no point in the whole St. Olaf College problem are its friends so much concerned as on its attitude to the conservative faith. This is the most vital feature of the institution. In this connection I shall utter my conviction with no uncertain sound.

The aim of the founders and of the supporters of our college is set forth in our annual catalog in the following language:

"The general aim of St. Olaf College is to give young men and women a higher education on the basis of the true Christian faith as taught in our Evangelical Lutheran Church. For it is our conviction that there is no true culture or education without personal Christi-

anity. We believe that all mental training, in order to have any real value, must be blended with Christian faith and love. We are therefore desirous that all the young people of our Church who get a liberal education should be under constant Christian influence and be directed by the religious instruction of the Church.

The chief and special object of this school is to prepare young men for taking up the study of theology, in order that they may become ministers or missionaries of the Church."

This language defines quite fully our position. Our institution teaches Christianity not as presented by so-called modern scholarship, but conservatively, as it is "taught in our Evangelical Lutheran Church."

The old Gospel was offensive to the philosophic Greek mind in the days of Paul, the apostle. It has been offensive to human philosophy in every age since then; it is so now. Because of this, the antagonists of the Gospel have been many. Agnostics, infidels, skeptics, have argued and warred against it in every age. In our day they have drawn for much of their pretended ammunition upon the resources of the natural sciences. During the past half century great changes have taken place in Christian theology. Many learned votaries of this sacred science have been presenting it in such manner that it has become quite acceptable to agnostics and skeptics. One of these modern preachers stated some months ago his belief that if Col. Ingersoll were living now and could see Christian theology in its present form, the colonel would at once become a Christian. I agree with the preacher in the same belief, which all means, not that agnostics have changed, but that modern theology has bodily gone over to the agnostic and infidel position.

The president of the Carnegie Foundation informs us that this theology, "restated in terms of present-day learning" is gaining acceptance at colleges and universities. He adds that "the student who prided himself on being an agnostic \* \* \* has practically disappeared." No doubt he is right. I would only add: Naturally; why should the agnostic oppose theology any longer when theology has gone over and joined him in his unbelief?

But not all Christian theology has thus surrendered to the enemy. In the Lutheran Church in America we have a large number of theologians who are justly classed as critical and philosophical thinkers of the highest rank and who at the same time adhere devoutly to the conservative theology of the plain old Gospel. All our American Lutheran theologians hold this attitude.

In this conservative company will be found St. Olaf College. On this matter she will hereafter continue to bear a clear and unequivocal testimony.

Guizot, in his History of France, relates the following incident from the life of Joan of Arc. She purposed to travel to a certain destination. She attempted to mount her black charger, but he was very restive and would not let her mount. Then said she, "Lead him to the cross"—a cross "which was in front of the neighboring church in the road. There she mounted him without his moving, and as if he were tied up."

Skeptical modern theology and much of our educational philosophy are zealously providing a religion that is intended to carry the human race to its final happy destination. And many men are earnestly struggling to mount the provided conveyance. But this religion is restive, unsettled, vague, giving no sure ground. It refuses to assume the burden of mankind and to guarantee a safe carriage and delivery.

Let us repeat the Domremy Maiden's command: "Lead him to the cross." Back to the cross of Christ, thou modernized Christianity; be tied again to the cross, and thou shalt find stable conviction and the peace-giving certainty of the long-tried Christian faith. Then



3 0112 105931619

will thy spiritual conveyance bring the wayfaring pilgrim in safety to his high destination—to join the throng that through the centuries have journeyed by the same means to their joyous rest.

St. Olaf College has in the past stood for the cross; it will continue to do so in the future. Fram, Fram, Cristmenn, Crossmenn, bears witness. Its song will be:

In the cross of Christ I glory,  
Towering o'er the wrecks of time.

I look into the future. I see the great pretentious fabric of modernized theology collapsed. I see its fragments scattered upon the same field where lie scattered the fragments of all its rationalistic predecessors of the centuries gone by. Amid all this wreck I see the fact and I hear the voices say: **"The cross is still there."** And St. Olaf College cherishes the sincere aim that also in that day as now she may be found near the towering cross of Christ.

Alexander Dumas, in one of his books, draws before his reader's imagination the picture of young D'Artagnan's departure from his father's house to try his own fortune in the great world of knighthood. His mother equipped him with a peculiar but valuable gift. She gave him a salve. This preparation would heal any wound with one exception. A wound in the heart was beyond its healing power.

Mankind is full of wounds—like Lazarus at the rich man's door. It has wounds and wounds upon all its members; and furthermore it has a deep and deadly wound in the heart. And in this heart-wound all the outer wounds have their source and cause.

Modernized theology and educational scholarship is giving to wounded mankind an elaborately prepared salve. A service of social reformers are busy applying it to the wounds. A loose, undefined faith in some personal God cures the outer nastiness of atheism. A life of outer morality smooths off the crust of coarse vice. "Social service" and "social uplift" will aid some in relieving the sore spots of poverty and economic misery.

We find no fault with all this so far as it goes. Only permit us to say this: This modern rationalistic and social-uplift salve, while possibly tending in a measure to alleviate the external symptoms, does not and cannot heal the deep and fatal wound in the heart, the real source of all the external wounds.

The human soul cries for a salve that will primarily cure the heartwound. It is our conviction that our Savior has given us such a remedy in the revealed truth of His wonderful Gospel. As a Church we yet continue, amid this modernized generation, to promulgate in its simple literal sense the old Gospel story. And men find healing, comfort and peace from its power today as did men in the centuries gone by.

Day by day, to the deep inner life of the successive generations of students within our gates, we shall as a college constantly strive, for healing purposes, to apply the wonderful Gospel truths of our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ; and, furthermore, to cultivate in our students such taste for the noble work of dispensing this divine balm to suffering mankind that many of them shall choose to consecrate their life and energies to this holy service.

In the humble efforts that it will be my privilege to perform for the attainment of the end thus briefly outlined, I modestly request the hearty, loyal and prayerful assistance and support of all the friends and organizations interested in the success of St. Olaf College; and I humbly invoke the sustaining and guiding help of the Triune God, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.